



Keith Chapman
Town Manager

TOWN OF NEWINGTON

131 CEDAR STREET
NEWINGTON, CONNECTICUT 06111

MAYOR BETH DELBUONO

NEWINGTON TOWN COUNCIL

MEETING MINUTES

March 24, 2020

RECEIVED FOR RECORD
IN NEWINGTON, CT

2020 MAR 30 AM 11:33

James E. Krupinski
Town Clerk

*****This meeting was closed to public attendance per Executive Order 7B.*****

Mayor DelBuono called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. in Room L-101

I. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

II. ROLL CALL

Councilor Anest
Councilor Braverman *(via telephone)* (7:08 p.m.)
Councilor Budrejko
Councilor Camillo
Councilor Donahue
Councilor Manke
Councilor Miner
Councilor Nagel
Mayor DelBuono

Staff Attendees:

Keith Chapman, Town Manager
James E. Krupinski, Town Clerk
Susan Gibbon, Council Clerk

III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion by Councilor Manke to approve the agenda, as amended. Seconded by Councilor Anest. Motion passed 8-0. (Councilor Braverman absent). Motion by Councilor Manke to add, under Old Business, an agenda item regarding budget meetings and hearings. Seconded by Councilor Anest. Motion passed 8-0 (Councilor Braverman absent).

**IV. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION – IN GENERAL (Via Telephone Only: 860-665-8736)
(4 MINUTE TIME LIMIT PER SPEAKER ON ANY ITEM)**

- Susan Mazzoccoli, 149 Harris Drive stated that she is concerned that the councilors are sitting close to each other and not practicing social distancing.

V. REMARKS BY COUNCILORS ON PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

- Mayor DelBuono stated that they are abiding by Governor's recommendation regarding social distancing. Trying to lead by example. Mayor DelBuono asked for everyone to pause for a moment of silence for the two town residents that passed away from the Corona Virus this week.

VI. CONSIDERATION OF OLD BUSINESS (Action May Be Taken)

A. Town Hall Project Update

Phone: (860) 665-8510 Fax: (860) 665-8507
townmanager@newingtonct.gov
www.newingtonct.gov

- Town Manager Chapman stated that the town hall is continuing to be worked on. Project is underway, all the glass is in. Most of the second floor is painted, the third and first floor have dry wall in. The gym roofing is substantially complete and the slab will be hopefully be poured sooner rather than later. The Community Center roof and walls are substantially complete.

B. Health Update

- Town Manager Chapman stated that in Newington there are 8 confirmed cases of the Corona Virus and unfortunately two residents have died from it. The town is aware of the challenges all of our citizens and businesses are facing. The town hall continues to operate at 100%. The BOE has closed portions of their operations. The library has discontinued handing out books and taking books in. All operations continue. The police department has had some challenges dealing with people who may or may not have the Corona Virus.
- Mayor DelBuono stated that the town hall itself is not open to the public at this time.
- Town Manager Chapman stated that the doors to the town hall are locked. There are signs posted at each entrance listing town department and phone numbers. If someone comes to the town hall and needs service, they can contact the department directly, and someone from that department can come home and assist them.
- Mayor DelBuono stated that the library posted information on their website if they have any questions.
- Town Manager Chapman stated that the town's website has links to many areas if people have questions.
- Mayor DelBuono stated that people can also sign up for alerts through the website
- Town Manager Chapman stated that he sent a memo to the council and all departments stating that they are only going to use two sources of information for updates: the State of Connecticut and the health district.
- Councilor Anest asked if the town manager knew who the second person was that passed away from the virus and when were you notified.
- Town Manager Chapman stated that he does not have that type of information. Was notified of the second persons passing this afternoon.
- Councilor Budrejko stated that some peoples mentioned that their pink recycling bags were not picked up today. Understand that it has been discontinued temporarily.
- Town Manager Chapman stated that is a private entity.
- Councilor Anest asked if, and when, the town was going to start limiting the number of people in the parks.
- Town Manager Chapman stated that he spoke with Chief Clark regarding this and don't believe we have the authority to do that. Understand there was a large contingency at the skate park this past weekend. Other than closing the park down, we don't have the authority to arrest people. It's an individual choice.
- Councilor Miner asked if it were possible to enact a temporary ordinance that can limit the number of people. Not trying to discourage anyone from using the parks, don't want 100 people hanging around in tight groups. Is that something we can do under the Governor's state of emergency?
- Town Manager Chapman stated that he thinks you can post something. Don't think we have authority to arrest people.
- Councilor Miner stated that in an effort to discourage people from using the parks, it's not going to stop them.
- Town Manager Chapman read that "an emergency ordinance shall be only for the immediate preservation of public peace, health and safety...", so it does qualify, "it shall contain the explicit statement of the nature of the emergency and be adopted by no less

than six affirmative votes of the council and shall take effect immediately. Every such emergency ordinance, and any amendments thereto, shall automatically stand repealed at the 61st day following the passage of said ordinance unless sooner repealed. In no event shall an annual budget constitute emergency appropriations.” Under this you could develop an ordinance, but would need to get guidance from our town attorney to make sure it is enforceable. If you like I can look into that and develop some language.

- Councilor Miner stated that if he could look into that, not trying to copy other jurisdictions, but Hartford has a prerecorded message that they can play from their cruisers to disperse crowds, if they see one that is large. It is a matter of public health and safety.
- Councilor Manke stated that it might not be a bad idea to make people more aware. Kids think that they are invincible and don’t realize that they can put the rest of us at risk because they are gathering in large numbers. Even if we can just post a sign that the skate park or ball field is closed at this time.
- Town Manager Chapman stated that they can look into having park employees as a conduit with that information. Will look into what can be done.
- Mayor DelBuono stated it is difficult because a lot of parents are still working and the kids are home taking care of themselves during the day and the parents aren’t always around, so it makes it more difficult, especially with the older kids.
- Town Manager Chapman stated that he will talk with his staff and see what other towns are doing and hopefully inform the kids, as well as adults.
- Councilor Donahue has a concern with putting a number on the sign. It’s should be either don’t come or not.
- Councilor Nagel stated that if nothing else if a sign is posted letting people.
- Councilor Miner stated that he doesn’t want this to take too long, especially with large numbers of kids gathering.
- Town Manager Chapman stated that being the director of safety and health for the town, if we institute a policy, that will serve as the same as an ordinance. Let me develop a policy and once I endorse it, it will be effective until I undo it.
- Councilor Miner asked that is something that you can do on your own and it does not require a formal vote.
- Town Manager Chapman stated that no, it does not require a formal vote.

C. Board of Education-Public School CIP Funds Transfer

Motion by Councilor Nagel

RESOLVED:

CERTIFICATION: In accordance with Section 808 of the Town Charter, I hereby certify that there exists, free from encumbrances, in the Public School Capital Improvement Projects, Undesignated Reserve Fund Balance \$700,000.

Janet Murphy, Director of Finance

RESOLVED:

That the Newington Board of Education is proposing to transfer the above certified funds in the Public School Capital Improvement Projects, Undesignated Reserve to the following account in the Public School Capital Improvement Projects, Town Hall FF&E:

<u>Account Number</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Amount</u>
31193-88050	Town Hall FF&E	\$700,000

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: That the Newington Town Council, as fiscal authority for the Town hereby appropriates \$700,000 from the Public School Capital Improvement Projects Reserve Fund to the expense account listed above.

Seconded by Councilor Manke. Motion passed 9-0.

- Councilor Camillo asked if there was number for the FF&E for the town hall.
- Town Manager Chapman stated that they are in the process of putting numbers together for that now.
- Town Clerk Krupinski stated that he received a rough estimate of approx. \$430,000 for both floors.

D. Discussion-Anna Reynolds Elementary School Roof Replacement

- Town Manager Chapman stated that he provided a report to the council that is done on a daily basis following any type of weather. Happy to report that this morning, I did stop at the school for a sport inspection and pleased to report that there were no leaks, even though we had a lot of rain and some snow yesterday. Will keep this on the agenda for discussion.
- Councilor Camillo went up on the roof and found it odd that someone was sweeping off the water.
- Town Manager Chapman stated that it is his understanding that each time it rains, the roofing contractor is sending out someone to clear the roof of water to make sure it doesn't penetrate.
- Councilor Camillo stated that standing water is ok, it will evaporate, maybe it isn't affixed properly and they are just saying it is.
- Town Manager Chapman stated that it is remaining dry and from his perspective as public safety director, as long as it is not unhealthy or unsafe I don't have any other jurisdiction.
- Councilor Miner stated that the roofing contractor warrantied the work for two years.
- Councilor Budrejko stated it reads that after each rain storm they will send someone out. Hope we get priority.
- Town Manager Chapman stated that if he finds the roof leaking, he will ask for it to be replaced, so there is an incentive for them to make sure it doesn't leak.
- Councilor Budrejko asked, since school is out, will someone be there daily checking inside.
- Town Manager Chapman stated that they have a floater custodian in the building now. Have not received any updated air quality tests.

E. 2018 LOTCIP Grant §8-24 TPZ Referral

- Town Manager Chapman stated that this is the grant for the work on Robbins Avenue from Main Street to up to Maple Hill. Have had several public hearings on this, have made adjustments based on those public hearings and are ready to send it to TPZ for their 8-24 approval. The concerns regarding the green have been addressed and it will remain as is. Ready to go forward with this.
- Councilor Budrejko stated that at the second public meeting there was good attendance and the concerns of the citizens were heard.
- Town Manager Chapman stated that because of the state shutdown not sure if this project will even move forward. May loose this construction season for this work to be done. Be prepared that many projects requiring state grants may not happen.
- Councilor Nagel asked if they were not going to happen at all or just a delay.
- Town Manager Chapman stated that it is just a delay. But considering what is going on now, it may not happen at all.

Motion by Councilor Budrejko

RESOLVED:

That the Newington Town Council hereby directs and authorizes the Town Manager to refer the matter of the realignment of Robbins Avenue in connection with the LOTCIP 2018 project to the Town Plan and Zoning Commission for its report in accordance with Section 8-24 of the Connecticut General Statutes

Seconded by Councilor Anest. Motion passed 9-0.

F. Budget Meeting Schedule

- Mayor DelBuono stated that this is regarding our scheduled budget meeting on Saturday, March 28th to review department budgets. Now that the governor has extended the timeline on budgets, should we not meet and see where we fall within the time line of this process moves on.
- Councilor Miner stated that we should just push it out allowing the opportunity for public comment. If we have that option I think we should take advantage of that.
- Councilor Budrejko stated that her concern is that she doesn't see how any community or even the state, can pass a firm budget given all of the impacts and uncertainty on our communities.
- Town Manager Chapman stated that taxes are due July 1st, not sure of how successful the collection rate will be. If people aren't working, they may not be able to afford to pay taxes.
- Councilor Manke stated that the impact of this may not be known for years.
- Councilor Budrejko asked the town manager if there have been discussions with the Governor regarding how the town should proceed with their budgets.
- Town Manager Chapman stated that it is up to each town as to how to proceed with their budgets. My concern is that we don't know what is going to happen. Would hate to commit to a project or budget that we can't keep. The longer you can delay, the better off you will be. Who knows what is going to happen.
- Councilor Miner stated that as long as we aren't being forced to meet our standard deadlines, we should push it back as much as we can.
- Town Manager Chapman stated that there is no one answering phones at the state.
- Councilor Budrejko asked the town manager if he was going to revise his budget.
- Town Manager Chapman stated that at this stage he thinks it is too early for that.
- Councilor Miner stated that other towns have just done a bare bones budget.
- Town Manager Chapman stated that the town works pretty much on a daily expenditure basis. Should wait to see what happens. There are a lot of unknowns. For example, the recreation area, if everything gets good by June 15th, people expect the fields to be usable and in good shape. We can't stop getting ready for what we anticipate may happen though it is going to cost money to get things ready. Will start having our department heads consider thinking about their actual needs.
- Councilor Miner stated that not to just punish them for their 2021 needs, but in light of everything going on, is there anything that can be pushed out. Have grave concerns about our July tax collections.

Motion by Councilor Manke

RESOLVED

That the Newington Town Council hereby cancels their upcoming budget meetings and will postpone any public hearings related to the budget following the Governor's guidance based on his executive order.

Seconded by Councilor Anest. Motion passed 9-0.

VII. CONSIDERATION OF NEW BUSINESS (Action May Be Taken by Waiving the Rules)

A. Affordable Housing Plan Technical Assistance Grant

- Town Manager Chapman stated that this grant enables municipalities under 50,000 in population to undertake a proactive planning process and layout a strategy for meeting the housing needs of existing and future residents and workers. Affordable housing is a topic that is on the forefront of every community in the state. This will provide us an opportunity to work with a consultant to come up with a plan that will take into consideration on all aspects of the Town of Newington and to develop a plan that both the council and TPZ will agree on. There is an opportunity for monies, not sure if any will be available, but would like to get our name on the list.
- Councilor Budrejko stated that this is great, it has been a bone of contention for years. Notice that we are applying for the maximum amount of the grant, will that be sufficient?
- Town Manager Chapman stated that there is money currently in the budget for this, so if it exceeds the \$15,000 grant.
- Councilor Budrejko stated that in the market study and analysis, data collection has to include the demographics of Newington including age and income as well as the poverty level. Another thing that is relevant, where he is talking about the "830-G" assessment, there is other housing in Newington for people with limited to no income. We have the VA housing, we have group homes whose residents use the services of Newington and we also have the Berlin Turnpike where there is housing, it needs to be included in the overall study of what type of housing and impact on services.
- Councilor Camillo stated that some of the properties on the Berlin Turnpike and some housing is Section 8.
- Town Manager Chapman stated that he is sure the consultant has faced these challenges in other communities and certain that the consultant will be able to address these housing needs. The Berlin Turnpike is not unique to Newington. Confident that the consultant will address these issues.
- Councilor Miner stated that deed restricted properties should also be identified.

B. Update to the Elections Emergency Operations Plan

- Town Manager Chapman stated that the existing plan identifies areas of voting to be the schools in town, however they are closed down. In the existing plan, if schools are not available, it is the police department, which does not make a lot of sense. What we are proposing to do, and because this is such a unique situation, we are proposing to open the language to identify where polling places can be relocated. I did speak with the Superintendent and she said that the schools would be available for voting, but that may not always be the case. We talked about the fire houses, under this scenario, but after speaking with the fire chief, we may contaminate the fire houses and the volunteers. Each situation needs to be addressed as something occurs. Need to open it up and choose based on conditions; not identify or be specific. This is a proposal to change the emergency contingencies.
- Mayor DelBuono asked who would be responsible for identifying the locations.
- Town Manager Chapman stated that it would be the registrar of voters, the town clerk and town manager's office.

C. Anna Reynolds PBC Funding Request

- Mayor DelBuono stated that the council received a memo stating: “The Anna Reynolds Public Building Committee, through its Chairman, Stephen Woods is requesting that the Town Council appropriate up to \$50,000.00 to allow the committee to take the next step in the process of working on establishing a budget for a future referendum on the Anna Reynolds Elementary School project.”
- Councilor Camillo asked if we do this will they come up with a budget for the project.
- Councilor Miner stated that this would allow the committee to hire Project Manager to prepare a construction budget.
- Councilor Camillo stated that if we approve this we can tell them what the money is for.
- Mayor DelBuono stated that at our next meeting, we can certainly have language in our resolution stating specifically what the money is for.
- Town Manager Chapman stated that is a request to move the project forward. Again, I want to caution you, we don’t know where we will be. You have the money available right now for this request.
- Mayor DelBuono stated that this was a high priority a few weeks ago. The roof appears to be have a temporary fix, and anticipated to last a few years. The impact of the Corona Virus on the community is still an unknown. There is a slight hesitation to undertake such a large project.
- Councilor Miner stated that this step allows us over the next two weeks to have a better understanding of where we are. The theory is by our next meeting we should have some type of direction.
- Councilor Donahue stated that this isn’t throw away money. If these needs to be delayed for 6 months.
- Councilor Budrejko stated that by passing this resolution, we will be getting a budget, but at some point we may feel that we cannot afford this.
- Councilor Miner stated that the building committee was started without any seed money. This is their first seed request, and the next logical step to hire a Project Manager to get a budget and a schematic drawing. That will remain whether we proceed or not.
- Mayor DelBuono stated that as was previously mentioned, in order for this to move forward this needs to be provided to the state by June 30th; whether or not the state acts on this at that time is unknown. In order to have a referendum on the ballot in November, we need to provide information by the end of August, so there are a lot of ifs here. Would we be even able to afford this given the current status of things. But having the numbers in front of us is important.
- Councilor Nagel stated that there is a time cascade.
- Councilor Miner stated that state may move their deadline, when they receive it there is no action until next year. Better to be in the front of the line, rather than the back of the line.

VIII. RESIGNATIONS/APPOINTMENTS (Action May Be Taken)

A. Resignation-Environmental Quality Commission

Motion by Councilor Manke

RESOLVED:

That the Newington Town Council hereby accepts the resignation of Jay Slater, Public Rep from the Environmental Quality Commission, in accordance with email correspondence received by the Town Clerk, dated March 13, 2020.

Seconded by Councilor Nagel. Motion passed 9-0.

- Councilor Budrejko stated that she wanted to recognize all the work Jay has done on the commission. Very instrumental over the past two years with the Earth Day activities. It is a huge loss, but understand he does have other commitments.

B. Appointment – 150th Anniversary Steering Committee

Motion by Councilor Manke

RESOLVED:

That the Newington Town Council hereby makes the following appointment:

150th Anniversary Steering Committee

21 Public Members maximum
Resolution #2018-159

Name	Address	Party	Term	Replaces
Walter A Brideaux Jr	20 Dartmouth Place		3/24/2020 - 6 months after last event	Vacancy due to Resignation of A Turnbull

Seconded by Councilor Nagel. Motion passed 9-0.

C. Appointments – Environmental Quality Commission, Standing Insurance Commission & Vehicle Appeals Board

Motion by Councilor Anest

RESOLVED:

That the Newington Town Council hereby makes the following appointments:

Environmental Quality Commission

7 Members: 5 public members, 2 Industry members residents, 2 NTC Liaisons
4 year term
Party Max.: 5

Name	Address	Party	Term	Replaces
Karen Serio, Public Rep	74 Fox Run Court	D	3/24/2020-11/30/2023	Replaces Vacancy

Standing Insurance Committee

9 members, 2 NTC, 2 BOE, 2 Casualty/Claim or Engineering, 3 Underwriters
2 alternates
2 year term
Party Max.: 6

Name	Address	Party	Term	Replaces
R. Clarke Castelle Underwriter	167 Connecticut Avenue	D	3/24/2020 – 11/30/2021	Alternate - replaces vacancy

Vehicle Appeals Board

3 members, 2 alternates, 2 year term
Party Max.: 2

Name	Address	Party	Term	Replaces
R. Clarke Castelle Alternate	167 Connecticut Avenue	D	3/24/2020 – 11/30/2021	DeFacto Term replaces self

Seconded by Councilor Miner. Motion passed 9-0.

IX. TAX REFUNDS (Action Requested)

A. Approval of March 24, 2020 Refund for an Overpayment of Taxes

Motion by Councilor Budrejko

RESOLVED:

That property tax refunds in the amount of \$776.14 are hereby approved in the individual amounts and for those named on the “Requests for Refund of an Overpayment of Taxes,” certified by the Revenue Collector, a list of which is attached to this resolution.

Seconded by Councilor Manke. Motion passed 9-0.

X. WRITTEN/ORAL COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE TOWN MANAGER, OTHER TOWN AGENCIES AND OFFICIALS, OTHER GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES AND OFFICIALS AND THE PUBLIC

- None

XI. COUNCIL LIAISON/COMMITTEE REPORTS

- None

XII. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION – IN GENERAL (Via Telephone Only: 860-665-8736)
(3 MINUTE TIME LIMIT PER SPEAKER ON ANY ITEM)

- Rose Lyons, 46 Elton Drive stated that she didn’t understand the need for this meeting. Everyone should be practicing social distancing. Hope that in the future you think about your own health and safety.

XIII. REMARKS BY COUNCILORS

- Councilor Camillo asked if there was a way to do this without being in the room?
- Mayor DelBuono stated that, for the record, councilors did have an option to call into the meeting if there were uncomfortable coming to meeting. Yes, we are looking at different options for future meetings. Since this meeting was already posted, we decided to hold the meeting using social distancing. Our IT department is looking at ways to participate remotely. We will most likely move to that for future meetings. Things are rapidly changing and we did our best for this evenings meeting knowing that we want to continue to move the town forward and conduct business the way we need to. We have employees reporting to work and we want to lead by example by practicing social distancing and using the same practices we are expecting them to do. It made sense to me tonight and just so everybody knows, options were open to call in instead of coming. So we are here in this room, and we made that choice, that is the choice we made.
- Councilor Budrejko stated that she appreciates Ms. Mazzocoli’s and Ms. Lyon’s concern for us. Thank you very much.
- Councilor Manke stated that this is a crisis that we have not been through before and hope to never have to go through it again. Want to say that I do appreciate the Town Manager and his staff and employees, the town volunteers - EMS and fire department and our police department. They work hard to keep us safe in this crisis. They are professionals who are doing a fine job keeping us healthy and up-to-date, because things change every five minutes. They are living this, they are keeping on top of this.
- Mayor DelBuono stated that the last week we have all be inundated with calls and emails. It is an ongoing situation and we will continue to do our best to lead as elected officials. Trying to show everybody that we are open for business, still moving the town forward, doing so in the safest ways we know how. Extremely grateful for our EMS, our police, our fire - everyone out there putting themselves at risk. Thank you to our town staff, we are continuing to provide meals and services anyway we can and at the same time limiting exposure to our staff and employees. It is a very difficult juggling act and Town Manager Chapman is

working hard to make sure things run well. To the public, thank you for tuning in. Please check the town's website for updates and future meetings. We are all available by email, first initial, last name @newingtonct.gov. We check our emails pretty regularly.

XIV. EXECUTIVE SESSION:

A. REAL ESTATE#1 - §1-200(6)(D)

Motion by Councilor Manke

RESOLVED,

That the Newington Town Council, in accordance with CGS §1-200(6)(D) hereby moves to go into Executive Session, and invites the Town Council members, the Mayor, and the Town Manager, Keith Chapman, to discuss a Real Estate matters.

Seconded by Councilor Nagel. Motion passed 9-0.

Council adjourned to Executive Session at 8:18 p.m.

Executive Session ended at 9:37 pm.

XV. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Councilor Manke to adjourn the meeting at 9:37 p.m. Seconded by Councilor Camillo. Motion passed 9-0

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Gibbon
Council Clerk